Presentations of the 2010 Upstate Steampunk Extravaganza and Meetup

Presentations of the 2010 Upstate Steampunk Extravaganza and Meetup

Edited by

Gypsey Elaine Teague

CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS

PUBLISHING

Presentations of the 2010 Upstate Steampunk Extravaganza and Meetup,
Edited by Gypsey Elaine Teague

This book first published 2011

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-4438-2940-4, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-2940-3

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

GYPSEY ELAINE TEAGUE

In the fall of 2009 after a long weekend in Atlanta at Dragon*Con my wife and I were sitting at the house thinking about what we had just experienced. There in the hotels, on the streets, and throughout the shops and restaurants were thousands of people in Victorian clothing, copper and brass accessories, chatting and laughing about steam, trains, gears, and flying ships of helium. It was our first exposure to Steampunk and we, as thousands of others throughout the world, were hooked. We asked why there was nothing in the Upstate of South Carolina like this and realized that there wasn't because no one had thought to organize anything. That evening in Pendleton, South Carolina, the Upstate Steampunk Extravaganza and Meet Up was born.

In an article from the Christian Science Monitor no less Diana Vick, vice Chair of Steamcon in Seattle puts it best. "I believe it is due in part to the fact that it is a rejection of the slick, soulless, mass-produced technology of today and a return to a time when it was ornate and understandable." Her use of soulless and mass produced is exactly what vast numbers of Steampunk fans are looking to escape. With the help of contractors such as the Rosenbaums of Sharon, Mass, even dwellings and principle residences are being retrofitted to appear as they were or more likely would have been if Steampunk had become the present instead of our past.

And it is our past that also hooks us into the phenomenon. We may pick and choose what we want as though we are attending some sort of historical buffet. And to add more if we don't like what's on the menu or in the steaming trays we have the ability to make up our own entrée or dessert. So what that there were no highly maneuverable airships when Victoria sat on the throne. Do we care that firearms look more like laser beams and that no well dressed gentleman, or lady for that matter, would leave the mansion without their goggles and a sidearm? We are creating our own past and taking that into an unknown future. It's the world of Steampunk and with that world all things are possible. This was what we

had fallen into and the rabbit hole was not going to let us back to the 'real world', whatever the hell the real world is.

The first few weeks after that fateful planning session many of our friends told us that there wasn't enough interest in the Upstate of South Carolina to support a convention of this type. They were certain that there couldn't be more than ten or twenty people in the entire state that would understand the nuances of Steampunk since in their experience with Goth and other alternative life styles they couldn't generate enough interest or commonality to sustain more than a small lunch group. They said that's why everyone goes to Atlanta for things like this. We, as blind eyed optimists, thought they were wrong.

As librarians my wife and I have a background of academic conferences and paper presentations. We wanted our conference to offer those types of panels, but we also wanted the more 'fun' ones, the ones about what could happen if Verne and Wells really were right; completely right, and the world revolved around steam power. We posted calls for papers on the major list serves, sent out the notices to our friends, and their friends, and on November 20th, 2010, the first Upstate Steampunk conference was held. This anthology is what came about.

Many that we have talked to in the past 18 months have asked "what is Steampunk?" That's a hard one to pin down. There is Steampunk music from the country sound of Sugarland to the hard drive of Cruxshadows with Abney Park filling some of the middle. New authors, and some are featured in this anthology, are writing their own versions of Victorian history but they differ between themselves enough that no one definition may be readily quoted. For the conference we used the following description of the genre, but even this at times fails to take in the scope of what now seems to be everywhere.

> Steampunk is a juxtaposition of science fiction, fantasy, and Victorian alternate history. Its roots are in the literature and architecture of the late 19th century while having its branches reach into the future. It is The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen, the music of Abney Park, the engineering of Nikola Tesla, and the aviation of helium and hot air. In the 1980s a subculture of science fiction found a foothold in literature and science fiction conventions. These 'paths not taken' alternative histories gave the cyberpunk and Goth followers at the conventions a new path to follow. There were the works of H.G. Wells, the undersea submersible of Captain Nemo in Verne's 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, and the Victorian work of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein to start with. Add to that the architecture of the Victorian age as a gentrification in many of the inner cities of America and England, and you have a breeding ground for something not quite realized but possibly attainable.

In the end we were correct in a number of areas. There is a large group of interested Steampunk enthusiasts in the Upstate of South Carolina. There is a growing interest in the academic side of Steampunk and its influence on the current trend of literature. People will travel a fair distance to enjoy something that is well planned, affordable, and suited to their interests. In other words we had a hit on our hands.

There were 250 people in attendance at the convention. Through the generosity of those in attendance we were able to donate 300.2 pounds of food to the Clemson Community Care Food Bank in Clemson South Carolina and the conference was able to purchase as a donation to the Clemson University Libraries the twenty core fiction titles that John Klima proposed in the Steampunk 101 article. We had enough interest to begin the Upstate Steampunk Dining Out Society that now meets monthly at local historic pubs and restaurants to show off the latest Victorian/Steampunk clothing, toys, weapons, and jewelry.

This anthology is separated into three sections; the past, the present, and the future. As with any discussion of literature, art, history, etc, there is always a past. The past gives us what was then. It is what has been and in this case it's the writings of Verne, Pratchett, and Wells. The present gives us what is now. Alan Moore and Kevin O'Nell, Cherie Priest, and other current authors presenting their current view of past futures. And finally the future that gives us what might have been. Speculative pieces on how history could have changed and what the landscape would have looked like if it had. These are the fictional accounts of a world never realized but often times longed for.

THE PAST

It has always seemed to me that the past, no matter how dirty, dangerous, or dismal is thought of as the best, the brightest, and the most longed for. It is the place where the grass is always greener and the time that everyone wishes to go back to. However in the clear, bright light of day the past is usually none of these things. This is very much the case in Victorian England and the Americas. Victorian London, as with many of the other large metropolitan cities of the late 19th century was a crowded place with stench in the air, garbage in the street, and death in the doorways. The rich were very rich and the poor were very poor. There was a middle class, growing quickly, but the two extremes were still evident in everything seen, written, and heard.

These articles begin the process of bringing the past into the future. JT shows us how the trains, and they were the primary mode of travel for both the populace and the economy, brought the world closer together thus connecting the city and the country. Janet uses a contemporary author as a metaphor of the Victorian class struggle with *Discworld* and David ruminates on the classic futuristic story of hope, despair, and renewed hope in *The Time Machine*. These building blocks of the past begin our plunge into the present and our eventual final destination of the future.

Let the past begin.

THE GOLEMPUNK MANIFESTO: OWNERSHIP OF THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION IN PRATCHETT'S DISCWORLD

JANET BRENNAN CROFT

Abstract

In medieval Jewish folklore, golems are man-shaped automata, usually formed of clay, and activated by magic words written on or hidden within their heads. They are activated by magic, but generally do not have magical powers. Terry Pratchett's Discworld series uses golems as inexhaustible energy sources—untiring, immensely strong, and able to function in environments fatal to other beings. They thus function as simultaneous metaphors for two components of the Industrial Revolution: the steam that powered the machines, and the disposable human labor that ran them. They play a major role in Pratchett's "technology" sub-series, in which Discworld equivalents of the telegraph, the printing press, modern postal services and banking and so on threaten the power of the wizards and the balance of social class and international relations. But what happens when these self-aware beings begin to purchase themselves and become owners of the means of production? In this series, Pratchett offers an interesting and nuanced critique of the socially transformative power of technological innovation.

Keywords: Pratchett, Terry, Golems, Robots, Industrial Revolution, Marxism, Science fiction

Terry Pratchett is not usually thought of as a steampunk author, since his Discworld is clearly a fantasy world filled with wizards and witches, dwarves, vampires, trolls, werewolves, and magic. After all, it's flat and rests on the backs of four elephants standing on a giant tortoise swimming through space. But Discworld is also full of ordinary people living relatively ordinary lives without the help of magic, and inevitably

developing technology to do the things that magic does for the gifted. And Pratchett is notable for bringing the rigors of science fiction to bear on fantasy. If he resorts to 'handwavium' in one book for the sake of moving the story along, you will frequently see him going back to the glossed-over bit in a later book and trying to figure out how it 'really' works. This is especially evident in what is sometimes called his Industrial Revolution series, a sub-series in which the focus is on various technological advances which have social ramifications all over Discworld.

This series includes *The Truth*, which deals with the introduction of the printing press and the newspaper and their effects on government and the social hierarchy; *Going Postal*, which focuses on the competition of the newly developed 'clacks,' or semaphore-based telegraph system, with the revival of the post office through the invention of stamps; and *Making Money*, which examines the effects of going off the gold standard, the introduction of paper money, and the potential effects of a free, practically limitless power source. Some also include *Monstrous Regiment* in this series, as it deals in part with the effect of a free press, the telegraph, and photographic technology on the conduct of war. Other books also touch on technological advances but they may not be the prime focus of the book, like the computer Hex, first introduced in *Soul Music*, or the Combination Harvester in *Reaper Man*; or they may be deliberately abandoned, like the 'gonne' in *Men at Arms*, the motion picture in *Moving Pictures*, or the space-going craft in *The Last Hero*.

The themes of the Industrial Revolution series overlap nicely with those of steampunk. The primary focus is on the social effects of technology, but there is also an emphasis on the value of hackability (as opposed to magic, where there are no user-accessible parts); on technology made beautiful, as in the designs of Leonard of Quirm, Discworld's equivalent of Leonardo da Vinci; on the dangers of unchecked technology or poorly designed technology, as in the designs of B.S. 'Bloody Stupid' Johnston, whose mail sorter was capable of warping the space-time continuum; and on the intersection of class, money, power, and access to technology. At the same time, Pratchett's Discworld novels also exhibit other characteristics frequently found in steampunk literature: racial inclusivity,[1] a concern for sexual and social equality, and the supernatural as a major plot element.

The aesthetic is also reminiscent of steampunk, at least in the more recent books set in Ankh-Morpork. While the series as a whole is fantasy,

[1] For a discussion of race in steampunk literature and role-playing, with a consideration of gender issues as well, see Goh.

the great city of Ankh-Morpork is strongly reminiscent of Victorian London, with its vast divide between rich and poor; its small factories and manufacturing districts, guilds and apprenticeship systems; the docks, markets, and slaughter yards, the prostitutes and thieves; the plots and corruptions gleefully reported in many thriving, competing newspapers; the beginnings of forensics and a professional police force; governesses and butlers and etiquette books and balls and conspicuous consumption; the influx of racially diverse immigrants and the tensions they cause; the rural hinterland supporting the city; its growing international connections and its rapidly evolving technology. Pratchett doesn't describe clothing and interior decoration in great detail that often, but the two Sky One television productions based on this approximate time period in the city—*Hogfather* and *Going Postal*—definitely have a very Victorian look, and Pratchett was deeply involved in their production. Ankh-Morpork differs from London in one very key respect, though—it is a city-state, not the center of a kingdom, and it firmly rejects empire-building under the current ruling Patrician, Vetinari.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of Ankh-Morpork is the way it absorbs new races. Everything from trolls to vampires to gargoyles to werewolves to evangelical Omnians finds its niche in time, and inevitably winds up with a representative on the police force. There are now more dwarves in Ankh-Morpork than in the rest of Discworld put together. I want to focus here on one particular race, if they can be called a race, because of the way they so perfectly represent two essential elements of the Industrial Revolution: both the steam that powered the machines and the lives of the workers who ran the machines.

Where Golems Come From

Golems, like so many of the elements of Pratchett's Discworld, have their roots in our own world's folklore. In medieval Jewish legends, golems are man-shaped automata, formed of clay, and activated by magic words written on their foreheads. They generally did not have magical powers of their own beyond great strength, speed, and endurance. In the best-known versions of the tale, Rabbi Judah Loew, a great scholar who lived in the Prague ghetto in the 1500s, prayed for a way to help deliver his people from persecution, and received instructions on how to create and animate a golem. There are many stories of the deeds the golem performed at the rabbi's command; collections usually include, among other tales, a version of the familiar Sorcerer's Apprentice motif and a story of the foiling of a Blood Libel plot against the Jews at Passover.

Generally, over the years the golem serves the rabbi, he becomes both more human (even, in one retelling, asking for a Bar Mitzvah and a bride [Singer 66]), and less easy to control, and in the end the rabbi must erase the word that animates the golem and let it die (see, for example, Wiesel 89; Rogasky 79, Singer 65). Is it murder? In one version, it is explained that a golem has "no soul, only a nefesh – the kind of spirit that is given to higher animals" (Singer 75). Adam was called a golem in Genesis until he was given the power of speech and thereby a soul (Rogasky 91, Wilson 82, Rosenberg 188), and for this reason golems are generally not given the ability to talk.

The concept of the golem has evolved beyond these roots to become a common metaphor for anxiety about the modern world and the pace of technological change. Frankenstein's story is basically that of the golem, as is any story about a computer or robot developing self-awareness or going out of control. The golem can carry other meanings as well, though. In the original folkloric tales, the golem is strongly connected to the community; he is made by a holy man of a religion that values family; he becomes a member of the rabbi's family; he is brought to life in order to serve the community and as he becomes more self-aware, he longs to be even more closely tied to the community by participating in its sacred rituals. He is not created, like Frankenstein's monster, out of "curiosity, striving, and individualism" and he is never "denied family and thus humanity." When he must finally be destroyed, it is "with love, sorrow, and gratitude, and according to religious formulas" (Allison 93). "The rabbi sanctifies the monstrous and responds to it with pity and hope" and does not deny that it has a soul of some sort (94). Most importantly, the creation of the golem is a hallowed act of what J.R.R. Tolkien called *sub-creation*—the right and indeed responsibility of man, created in the image of the Creator, to in turn create. In this view, "the universe is magical. […] Man's practice of God's magic is not a violation of sacred order but a realization of sacred potential" (Wilson 83). In fact, in earlier, pre-medieval golem legends, the creation of a golem was seen as a proof of a rabbi's learning and holiness (Yair and Soyer 15).

In contrast, later interpretations of the golem tend to emphasize its creation as an act of unrestrained ego and attempted Promethean domination over nature—man meddling where he should not, "magic [as] a result of the fall, Adam's violation of God's law" (Wilson 83). In this interpretation, an act of creation by man too easily crosses the line and becomes a hubristic imitation of god, and therefore "a sin that is fated to be punished" (Yair and Soyer 1). In these stories the golem or its equivalent invariably rebels or runs mad and turns on and destroys its

creator (2); think of Frankenstein's monster, Hal 9000 from *2001*, or the androids of *Blade Runner*.[2] So "[c]reativity becomes a double-edged sword. The creative endeavor is replete with dangers" (Sherwin 24). The golem becomes a locus for concerns such as "skepticism [about] technical progress and [criticism of] the hubris of modern man" (22). Karl Marx drew on the concept of the golem to show that "tensions between men and their creations"—by 'creations' meaning both the capitalist system and the working class it created—"predict the destruction of the whole system, culminating in the frustration of the vain hopes of men and their most rational plans" (50). So the way I propose to look at Pratchett's golems—as symbolizing both the power source that drives capitalism and the workers swept up in robotic slavery to the capitalist system—is one familiar in Marxist thought; yet as we shall see, Pratchett does not buy into the inevitable destruction of the system. If this seems like a heavy burden of meaning for fantastic and steampunk stories to bear, consider this: as Charlie Stross pointed out in his rather harsh critique of steampunk as a fad, if steampunk accepts the trappings of empire and uncontrolled capitalism without examining its dark underside, it loses its 'punk' status and energy and risks falling into an unconsidered "romanticization of totalitarianism." Steampunk at its best should be, instead, an ideal way to explore and confront these issues.[3]

Pratchett's Golems

With this brief theoretical background in mind, let's now take a look at Pratchett's golems—what they are, how they come into being, what they do in the story, and what they mean. The three Discworld novels most concerned with golems so far are *Feet of Clay* [*FC*], in which they are introduced, and *Going Postal* [GP] and its sequel *Making Money* [*MM*], in which the fate of Ankh-Morpork's golems is intertwined with those of reformed con man Moist van Lipwig and Miss Adora Belle Dearheart, who runs the Golem Trust.

Discworld's golems were invented by the ancient Umnians, some 60,000 years before the current period. They rivaled the best statuary, delicate and beautiful, highly decorated, eggshell thin but nearly unbreakable, with sculpted musculature and "calm, sad faces" (*MM* 325),

[2] Or there is the assumption that it will, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, as in the movie *The Iron Giant.*

[3] See Killjoy for another and more considered discussion of the potential political aims of the steampunk movement and a call for a return to the more anarchic and anti-authoritarian ethos of first-generation steampunk.

and were bigger and heavier than later golems (*MM* 216-7). As Adora Belle tells the story, "It was [the Umnians'] only invention. They didn't need any more. Golems built their city; golems tilled their fields […]." Golems even built other golems. "You don't need weapons […] when you've got golems instead of city walls. You don't even need shovels" (*MM* 229). And so they brought the technological development of ancient Um to a screeching halt. With golems, what need was there to invent any further tools? And thus we have the first cautionary economic tale about golems—their inventors or their descendents, like H.G. Wells' Eloi or the humans in Jack Williamson's "With Folded Hands," cared for and coddled by machines they can no longer understand, repair, or control.

Later golems were not so carefully and beautifully made, but there was one important advance: the *chem*, the animating holy words, were written on a slip of paper placed inside their hinged hollow skulls instead of carved and baked into their clay, thus making golems re-programmable, and all golems had to allow access to their chem if requested (*FC* 78). The chem contained a set of prohibitions very much like Isaac Asimov's Three Rules of Robotics (for example, golems weren't allowed to hurt people [*FC* 97]), and made clear the purpose of the golem's existence: "GOLEM MUST WORK. GOLEM MUST HAVE A MASTER" (*FC* 2, 78, 157). Additionally, golems had to be given time off for their holy day every week (*FC* 81); as Moist muses, "It was part of what distinguished golems from hammers" (*GP* 227).

One character explains, "There are more golems around than you might think. […] They can work underwater, or in total darkness, or knee-deep in poison. They don't need rest or feeding" (*FC* 78). "Some are walled up in treadmills or at the bottom of shafts. Doing messy tasks, you know, in places where it's dangerous to go" (*FC* 102). But it isn't exactly slavery, at least not to the minds of other races; "You might as well enslave a doorknob" (*FC* 78). Still, "Golems had no concept of freedom. They knew they were artifacts; some even still bore, on their clay, the finger marks of the long-dead priests. Golems were made to be owned" (*MM* 227-8).

At this point in the history of Discworld there is a prohibition against making new golems (*FC* 2, 101) since it is considered the prerogative of the gods to create new life – though golems are technically considered "unalive," in contrast to the by-now-familiar "undead" peoples living in Ankh-Morpork (*FC* 76). Which brings up the question of where the soul of a golem comes from, since they are obviously self-aware. Pratchett gives no clue beyond the fact that a holy man had to write out the words (*FC* 165) and, it is implied, oversee the firing of the clay. Given what we

know of Discworld, it's possible to speculate that "ensoulment," like belief (cf. *Hogfather*), just needs something around which to crystallize; in this case, the writing of the chem might focus any spare 'soul' floating around, just as at the time of *Hogfather* merely naming the Hair-Loss Fairy precipitates enough spare 'belief' to call him into existence.

In the book where we first encounter golems, *Feet of Clay*, the golems have begun to chafe against their conditions and desire freedom and self-determination. Perhaps it is just something in the air of Ankh-Morpork, with its churning soup of multiculturalism and constant social upheaval. They attempt gain their freedom by creating a king-golem, with bits of their own clay mixed in (*FC* 213), but they put too many commands in its chem, asking it to create peace and justice for all, to rule them wisely, to teach them freedom, on and on, begging it to meet all their needs (224). Like the golems of modern literature, it goes mad and starts killing people, particularly those who made it—"it knew who to blame" (215).

There is a strong anti-monarchial strain in Discworld books, particularly the City Watch series of which *Feet of Clay* is a part, and the flawed golem plan bears out this theme. Sam Vimes, the commander of the City Watch, is a descendant of the man who executed the last reigning king of Ankh-Morpork, and in spite of the Patrician's highly successful governance of the city, there are continual attempts by the aristocrats to re-install a puppet king. However, a true king exists—Captain Carrot Ironfoundersson, who serves under Vimes in the watch. Carrot is one of the most intriguing characters in the series; perhaps the most efficient way to describe him is 'ruthlessly good.' He has no desire to be king; quite sincerely believing that the best way he can serve his City is by being a watchman. And yet he fulfills the mythical functions of a sacral king, particularly in this book, as a healer and gift-giver. He promises the golem Dorfl: "If a golem is a *thing* then it can't commit murder, and I'll still try to find out why all this is happening. If a golem *can* commit murder, then you are *people*, and what is being done to you is terrible and must be stopped. Either way, you win, Dorfl" (FC 157).

Carrot is the instrument of *the* turning point in the history of golem-hood, which occurs when he saves Dorfl from a mob, tries to take him back to his employer, and winds up buying him for $1, insisting upon a receipt. He then simply *gives* Dorfl to himself by adding the receipt to the chem inside his head. It takes Dorfl a while to truly understand the implications of not having a master, of being his OWN master, but eventually he focuses in on the sense of responsibility for his own actions: "Not *Thou Shalt Not*. Say *I Will Not*" (192). With this newfound freedom of action Dorfl sacrifices himself to kill the king golem, which takes the

chem out of Dorfl's head to stop him. Yet Dorfl still lives, and writes out "WORDS IN THE HEART CAN NOT BE TAKEN" (224). And when he is re-baked, this time with a voice, Commander Vimes deputizes him—which seems his usual method of trying to deal with new races in Ankh-Morpork. Can you stick a badge on it and swear it in? Good, now it's a copper, not a golem or a werewolf or a zombie—just a copper.

Vimes says "*he* thinks he's alive, and that's good enough for me" (*FC* 240). Dorfl continually makes a point of his self-ownership and its implication that every single action is now a moral choice (*FC* 234), and compares freedom, aptly enough, to having the top of one's head opened up (243). In any case, soon after being sworn in as a Watchman, Dorfl announces his plan to begin saving his wages and buying other golems and setting them free (244).

Moist and Adora Belle, with Golems

Going Postal picks up long enough later that free golems are well-established as an everyday fact of life for Ankh-Morpkians, though still somewhat exotic to outsiders. They have become accepted for the most part as persons. "[T]hey never wore out and they worked, all the time. You saw them pushing brooms, or doing heavy work in timber yards and foundries. Most of them you never saw at all. They made the hidden wheels go round, down in the dark […] But now the golems were freeing themselves. It was the quietest, most socially responsible revolution in history. They were property, and so they saved up and *bought* themselves" (*GP* 45-46).

In this novel, while there is some development of golem lore and the introduction of several golems with distinct personalities, they initially serve as a plot device to bring Moist van Lipwig, a con artist saved from the gallows and tasked with bringing the Post Office back to life, together with Miss Adora Belle Dearheart. Adora Belle is a fine embodiment of the steampunk aesthetic, with her severe dark clothes, high heeled boots, absolute assumption of equality, and take-no-prisoners attitude towards life. She runs the Golem Trust, an organization founded on Dorfl's idea of helping golems buy their freedom, which seeks out new golems to free and serves as an employment office for freed golems. Its motto is "By Our Own Hand, Or None" (*GP* 64). Once a new golem was located, the Golem Trust would purchase it, and then the golem would earn its own price back and start contributing to the Trust itself. Adora Belle explains the speechlessness of golems from a different perspective than the religious one offered above: "A lot of the cultures that built golems thought tools

shouldn't talk." But when the Trust buys a golem, the free ones give it the ability to speak—she doesn't know exactly how, but it's not just a matter of baking them a tongue (154).

When they first meet, she takes Moist to task for being too politically correct ("do you get a warm, charitable feeling when [you call a golem Mister]? (61) then explaining "Golems don't have any of our baggage about 'who am I, why am I here,' okay? Because they *know*. They were made to be tools, to be property, to work. Work is what they do. In a way, it's what they *are*. End of existential angst. […] And then stupid people go around calling them 'persons of clay' and 'Mr. Spanner' and so on, which they find rather strange. They *understand* about free will. They also understand that they don't have it. Mind you, once a golem *owns* himself, it's a different matter." (63) And so, in a sort of circular reasoning consistent with the golems' own circular view of the universe, what do golems own when they own themselves? Like any free being, they own a tool, a means of production, which they then have the free will to hire out for their own financial benefit. This does frighten some people; the windows of the Golem Trust are the frequent targets of graffiti and thrown bricks.

For all her prickliness, "Moist noticed that [Adora Belle] spoke to golems differently. There was actual *tenderness* in her voice" (*GP* 159). She checks on all the hired golems once a week to be sure they are treated properly and not forgotten (163). Given her personality and history, one of the things that most appeals to her about golems is that "They're not frightened of 'forever.' They're not frightened of *anything*" (164). Her hardness and bitterness are not surprising. The other point at which the worlds of Moist and Adora Belle intersect is the clacks. The clacks system, first introduced in *The Fifth Elephant*, is the Discworld equivalent of the telegraph and based on an actual abandoned technology in our world, the semaphore tower system or optical telegraph. Adora Belle's father invented them and her brother was a clacks technician who died under mysterious circumstances, in fact murdered as a result of the efforts of a syndicate determined to buy up all the independent clacks companies, develop a monopoly, and milk them dry with no regard for sustainability. They also want to eliminate any potential competition from the post office, which is where Moist comes in.

But why, given magic, would you need such a thing as the clacks? Because of how magic works in Discworld: "Oh, you *could* do it all by magic, you certainly could. You could wave a wand and get twinkly stars and a fresh-baked loaf. You could make fish jump out of the sea already cooked. And then, somewhere, somehow, magic would present its bill, which was always more than you could afford" (147). But even more aptly

to our steampunk theme, Moist talks about the enchantment of technology and machinery as opposed to mere magic, delivering a sort of maker hymn to the romance of human ingenuity:

> Ordinary men had dreamed it up and put it together, building towers on rafts in swamps and across the frozen spines of mountains. They'd cursed and, worse, used logarithms. They'd waded through rivers and dabbled in trigonometry. They hadn't dreamed it, in the way people usually used the word, but they'd imagined a different world, and bent metal around it. And out of all this sweat and swearing and mathematics had come this . . . thing, dropping words across the world as softly as starlight. (316)

In the sequel to *Going Postal*, *Making Money*, now that Moist has revitalized the post office, Vetinari aims him at the monetary and banking system. Though we first saw some complaints about golems taking jobs from the other races of Ankh-Morpork in *Feet of Clay*, this is where Pratchett seriously begins to explore the economic implications of golems. Moist is busy questioning the reasoning behind the gold standard and inventing paper money and micro-loans, and realizing that it is the city itself, its people and productivity, that backs the currency: "The city is the magician, the alchemist in reverse. It turns worthless gold into . . . everything. […] The *city* says a dollar is worth a dollar" (115). "What is a coin compared to the hand that holds it? That's worth! That's value!" (384).

But at the same time, the free golems are bringing to the fore concerns about machines putting humans out of work and upsetting the economic balance by doing the same work for far less money than a human. Though wages are falling because of the immigration of all sorts of people to Ankh-Morpork, it is easiest simply to blame the golems, "who uncomplainingly did the dirtiest jobs, worked around the clock, and were so honest they paid their taxes. But they weren't human and they had glowing eyes, and people could get touchy about that sort of thing" (100).

The novel starts with the Golem Trust learning of a cache of buried ancient golems and sending Adora Belle Dearheart to dig them out. Due to her misunderstanding of an ancient inscription, she was expecting four solid gold golems—which would have had a bad enough impact on the economy by dramatically increasing the city's gold reserves in an instant—but what shows up is 4,000 ceramic guard golems, who march up and form a defensive ring just outside the city walls (316). Not too surprisingly, the other cities immediately see this as a threat—"aggressive defense," as Vetinari calls it (317), saying "Miss Dearheart […] has been kind enough to bring Ankh-Morpork an army capable of conquering the

world, although I'm happy to accept her assurance that she didn't really mean to" (317).

Adora Belle warns "They have no chem that I can get at. […] There's no way of opening their heads! As far as we can tell they have one overriding imperative, which is to defend the city. And that's all. It's actually carved into their clay" (317). She reports that the freed golems "don't like them. They think they will cause trouble. They have no chem that can be changed. They're worse than zombies." Ancient as they are, they may even have no prohibition against killing humans. (374) One of the councilors does propose that they use them to conquer their neighbors: "What a weapon […]. They could collapse a city in a day" (331). But Vetinari insists "We are not going to have another wretched empire while I am Patrician. We've only just got over the last one" (318). "We didn't intend the Empire," he reminds his council. "It just became a bad habit" (338).

He *is* quite willing to treat them as tools to put to work for the city—initially he says "Those people are resurrected from darkness to turn the wheels of commerce, for the general good. […] [Miss Dearheart] is doing the city a great service" (29)—until the potentially disastrous economic consequences are spelled out for him. Yes, the golems could do the work of 120,000 men. But that would put 120,000 men out of work. And golems don't spend money on food, shelter, clothing, or entertainment—all they really need is the occasional tube of ceramic cement—so demand for goods and services would drop along with the number of people who could still afford to pay for them, and there would be further unemployment among those not directly displaced by the golems (320). Having that many unfree golems enter the work force at once would ruin the city one way or another, through war, economic upset, or the internal rot that comes from being the heart of an empire.

Moist understands that they need to be removed from the scene and rendered inert, and con man that he is at heart, works out how to command them – then orders them to march ten miles from the city and bury themselves again. "They could do wonderful things for the city, couldn't they?" protests a reporter. But he responds,

> Like embroil it in a war or create an army of beggars? My way's better! […] I want to base the currency on them! […] Gold that guards itself! […] How much are they worth? […] They could build canals and dam floods, level mountains and make roads! If we need them to, they will! And if we don't, then they'll help to make us rich by doing nothing! The dollar will be so sound you could bounce trolls off it! (332)

At the end we are left with Ankh-Morpork on the golem standard, the reserve golems backing the currency. Some of the ancient golems and horses are in use to power the clacks towers and pull the mail coaches, but the rest are safe in their own self-made vault, being good as gold, as it were. And it looks like Vetinari is about to turn Moist loose on the tax system in order to fund his next major modernization project—The Undertaking, from all hints we've seen so far a subway system—which will certainly provide enough jobs to go around.

Conclusion

Pratchett has, in the Industrial Revolution series, addressed a number of questions that the figure of the golem raises: "What is the legal status of a Golem? Is a Golem a person? […] Is destroying a Golem murder? Can a Golem be intelligent? Is an 'intelligent' Golem different from other Golems?" (Sherwin 26). More specific to our topic, Pratchett has used his golems to present us with a number of scenarios representing modern economic concerns—the problems of unemployment caused by industrial manufacturing methods abruptly replacing human labor, the difficulties of absorbing the immigration of a new labor source willing to take on the bottom rung of available jobs, the dangers of a major change being implemented without thoroughly thinking through its implications. Complicating the issue is the fact of the golems' status as "human for a given value of human" (40), meaning that their self-ownership echoes socialist and communist ideas that came about in our own world in response to these same stresses. Golems embody the idea that the means of production should be in the possession of those doing the producing. Yet they problematize the issue, at the same time, by having no physical needs and thus not completing the cycle of production and consumption.

Part of the brilliance of Terry Pratchett as a writer is his skill making these deep issues of how the world operates, how people live together, what makes a city like Ankh-Morpork run, or what issues we might have to think about in a world of self-aware machines, an integral part of a fast-paced and humorous adventure story. But to the maker aesthetic, what makes things tick, what makes humans work, and what we need to think about to make the future itself function humanely, is an adventure itself. Pratchett is very good at making us think about these things—while we think we are just being entertained.

Bibliography

Allison, Alida. "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner? The Golem as Family Member in Jewish Children's Literature." *The Lion and the Unicorn* 14 (1990): 92-97.

Blade Runner. Dir. Ridley Scott. Perf. Harrison Ford, Rutger Hauer, Sean Young. 1982. Warner Home Video, 1999.

Goh, Jaymee. "On Race and Steampunk." *SteamPunk Magazine* 7 (2009): 16-21.

Going Postal. Dir. Jon Jones. Perf. David Suchet, Tamsin Greg. 20th Century Fox, 2010.

Hogfather. Dir. Vadim Jean. Perf. David Jason, Marc Warren, Michelle Dockery. Genius Entertainment, 2007.

The Iron Giant. Dir. Brad Bird. Perf. Jennifer Anniston, Harry Connick, Jr., Vin Diesel. Warner Brothers, 1999.

Killjoy, Margaret. "You Can't Stay Neutral on a Moving Train (Even if it's Steam-Powered)." *SteamPunk Magazine* 7 (2009): 4-7.

Pratchett, Terry. *Feet of Clay*. New York: HarperCollins, 1996.

—. *The Fifth Elephant.* Harper, 2000.

—. *Going Postal*. New York: HarperCollins, 2004.

—. *The Last Hero.* Gollancz, 2001.

—. *Making Money*. New York: HarperCollins, 2007.

—. *Men at Arms.* Harper, 1993.

—. *Monstrous Regiment.* New York: HarperCollins, 2003.

—. *Moving Pictures.* ROC, 1990.

—. *Reaper Man.* Gollancz, 1991.

—. *Soul Music*. Harper, 1995.

—. *The Truth.* Harper, 2000.

Rogasky, Barbara. *The Golem*. Illus. Trina Schart Hyman. New York: Holiday House, 1996.

Rosenberg, Yudl. *The Golem and the Wondrous Deeds of the Maharal of Prague*. Trans. Curt Leviant. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.

"Semaphore Line." Wikipedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Optical_telegraph> 15 Nov. 2010.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. 1831. London: Oxford University Press, 1969.

Sherwin, Byron L. *The Golem Legend: Origins and Implications*. Lanham MD: University Press of America, 1985.

Singer, Isaac Bashevis. *The Golem*. Illus. Uri Shulevitz. New York: Farrer Strauss Giroux, 1982.

Stross, Charlie. “The Hard Edge of Empire.” <www.antipope.com.> 27 Oct. 2010.
“The Three Laws of Robotics.” Wikipedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Laws_of_Robotics> 18 Nov. 2010.
Tolkien, J. R. R. "On Fairy-Stories." *The Tolkien Reader*. New York: Ballantine, 1966. 3-84.
2001. Dir. Stanley Kubrick. Perf Kier Dullea, Gary Lockwood. 1968. Warner Home Video, 2001.
Wells, H.G. *The War of the Worlds.* 1898. New York: Penguin, 2005.
Wiesel, Elie. *The Golem: The Story of a Legend*. Trans. Anne Borchardt. Illus. Mark Podwal. New York: Summit, 1983.
Williamson, Jack. “With Folded Hands.” *Analog: Writer’s Choice. Vol.5*. Ed. Stanley Schmidt. New York: Dial Press, 1983. 8-43.
Wilson, Eric G. *The Melancholy Android: On the Psychology of Sacred Machines*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006.
Yair, Gad and Micaela Soyer. *The Golem in German Social Theory*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008.

Janet Brennan Croft is Head of Access Services at the University of Oklahoma libraries. She is the author of *War in the Works of J.R.R. Tolkien* (Praeger, 2004; winner of the Mythopoeic Society Award for Inklings Studies), has published articles on Tolkien in *Mythlore*, *Mallorn*, *Tolkien Studies*, and *Seven*, and is editor of two collections of essays: *Tolkien on Film: Essays on Peter Jackson’s Lord of the Rings* (Mythopoeic Press, 2004) and *Tolkien and Shakespeare: Essays on Shared Themes and Language* (McFarland, 2006). She has also written on library issues for a number of different journals, and is the author of *Legal Solutions in Electronic Reserves and the Electronic Delivery of Interlibrary Loan* (Haworth, 2004). She edits the refereed scholarly journal *Mythlore*.

STEAM RAILWAYS: TRAINS AND TRAVEL DURING THE EARLY VICTORIAN ERA

JOHN T. THORPE

Abstract

Most of us are familiar with the descriptions of the luxurious Orient Express and can imagine the romance of travel by rail in the late Victorian era. Some of us remember the glory days of dining cars, sleepers, and comfortable travel accommodations. Some of it still exists today, but we seldom make use of it. In the early days of travel by train, the luxuries we take for granted didn't exist. The following article briefly describes what travel was like during the early Victorian era and what one might expect to observe as a traveler. Its content is derived from a lecture given by the author at the first Upstate Steampunk Extravaganza and Meetup on November 19, 2010.

Keywords: railroads, railways, Victorian Era, travel

Pre-Railway Steam-Powered Travel

Before there was steam-powered rail travel, there were a few experiments with steam-powered road vehicles. By and large, the early ones were unsuccessful primarily for technological and practical reasons. For instance, one of the earliest road vehicles was developed for the French Military in 1770 by Nicolas-Joseph Cugnot. His self-propelled *fardier à vapeur* was intended for hauling cannon, but its top speed was about 2.25 mph, it required restocking its fuel and water supply every hour, and it wasn't very stable.

The first practical demonstration of steam-powered road travel was in 1801—the *Puffing Devil*, built by Richard Trevithick. Unfortunately, it broke down within 3 days of its first run and was never able to operate for

long periods. With his cousin Andrew Vivian, Trevithick demonstrated a more successful road locomotive in 1803—*The London Steam Carriage.*

Figure 1: Richard Trevithivk

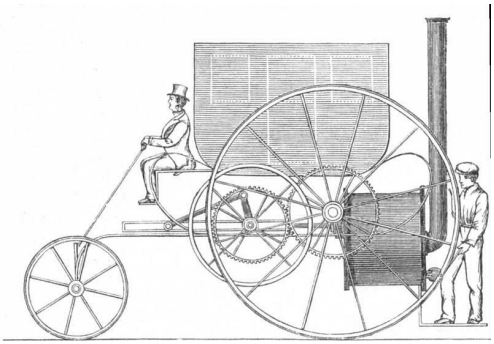

Figure 2: The London Steam Carriage

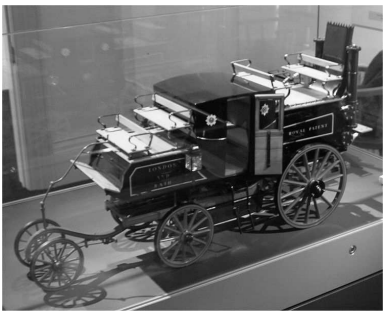

Figure 3: Dr. Gurney's Steam Carriage, The Castle, Bude

A little remembered, but slightly more successful, steam carriage was developed by Sir Goldsworthy Gurney in 1827. Weighing in at 2 tons, it achieved a respectable 15 mph on its first run from London to Bath. The original carriage was attacked and destroyed by a mob in Melsham, Wiltshire. But, undeterred, Gurney continued building these carriages, offering them for £1000 apiece. In 1831, one of them ran regular service between Cheltenham and Gloucester, making the 18 mile trip thrice daily. This steam carriage could very well have inspired George Barris' *Munster Koach* of television fame. A colorful model of the carriage is on display at the Castle in Bude.

Early Railways—The Locomotives

The earliest steam-driven railway locomotives were developed in early 1804, primarily for ironworks and collieries to move ore, coal, refined and finished goods. The first satisfactory self-propelled railway locomotive could haul about 15 tons at a speed of 5 mph. However, the first public railway to include passenger service was the Stockton and Darlington Railway—which started operations on September 27, 1825 using Stephenson-designed locomotives. The first passenger locomotive was the *Locomotion No.1*. These first locomotives didn't have the familiar arrangement of piston-driven wheels we are familiar with today, but instead seemed to have been based on the stationary "walking beam" steam engines used to pump water from mines and operate the winches. In 1829, the directors of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway invited designers to submit their locomotives to a test for a £500 prize. It was these "Rainhill Trials" at which George Stephenson's *Rocket* won the prize for its all-round competence over its competitors, the *Sanspareil* and the *Novelty*.

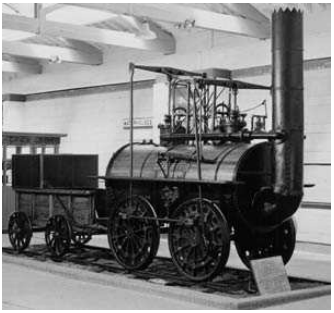

Figure 4: Locomotion No. 1

Railway Operations

The first signalmen, originally called Railway Policemen, were employed in the early 1800s. Their uniforms were similar to the constables of the day, including top hat and tailcoats. These early signalmen used flags to communicate with each other and train drivers, and employed hourglasses for the purpose of Time Interval Working between stations—a method of ensuring that the tracks are clear via hand signals (or flag

semaphores) given after a specific period of time since the passage of the last train.

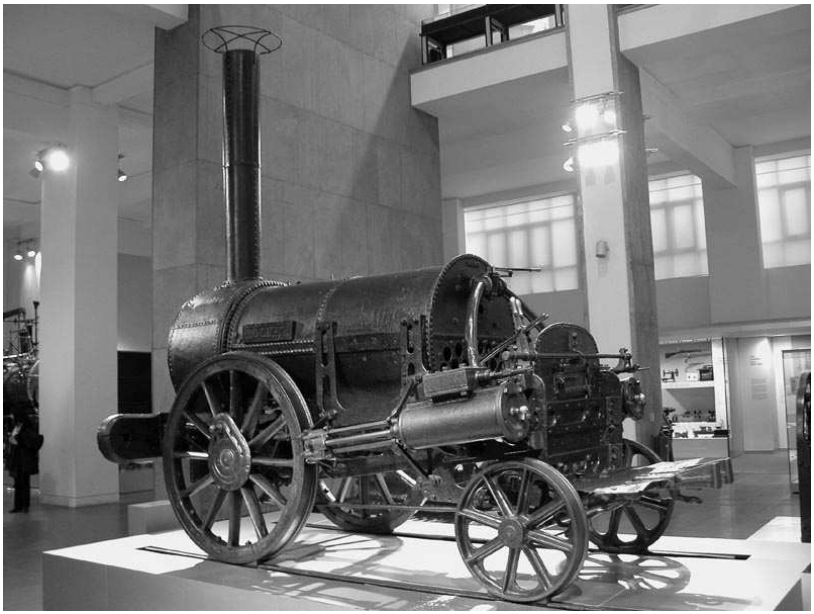

Figure 5: Stephenson's Rocket at the Science Museum, London

Figure 6: Romney Signal Box, © Angus Kirk